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Dr. Morris' program of research is focused on understanding psychosocial and neuroendocrine markers of risk for trauma-related psychopathology and persistent pain. The goals of his NIMH-funded K Award study are to identify (1) early markers of risk for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder (MDD) in women who have recently experienced interpersonal violence and (2) to identify coping strategies associated with resilience. Anticipated results from this study will help to identify women at risk for developing trauma-related disorders who may benefit from secondary prevention programs. The goals of his NIMHD-funded research project are to examine two novel mechanistic pathways linking cumulative adversity exposure to daily pain intensity and impairment in African-American adults – altered hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal activity and experimental pain sensitivity. Anticipated results from this study will set the stage for secondary prevention efforts aimed at eliminating racial disparities in chronic pain by identifying early risk markers for screening and potential targets for intervention.

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